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TRUSTEES' SECTION

(Friday, June 28, 8:15 p. m.)

The Trustees' section met on Friday evening, June 28, at the Chateau Laurier. Mr. W. T. Porter, of Cincinnati, chairman of the section, presided and Mr. T. L. Montgomery, librarian of the Pennsylvania State library, acted as secretary.

The first item on the program was a paper prepared by Dr. OTTO J. KLOTZ, trustee of the Ottawa public library, which was read in his absence.

THE TRUSTEE'S DUTY TO THE LIBRARY

Dr. Klotz said in part:

It should be assumed that when one accepts the appointment as library trustee he accepts therewith the duties and responsibilities of such position. He who treats them with indifference is a source of weakness to the board. There is no room on a library board for a man who accepts the appointment "just for the honor of it." The trustee must be seized with the fundamental idea and principle that the public library is the people's university, that it is the fountain to which all have access, whose wholesome waters shall give renewed life and intellectual strength.

The trustee's first duty is to see that the library receives adequate municipal support. This is seldom an easy matter. It generally requires a good deal of missionary work,—through the newspapers, through personal appeals to councillors, through public addresses before the council or otherwise. The public must be told of its need, which it frequently does not recognize. The trustee must exercise the influence of an educator.

The work of the trustee is often discouraging and disheartening, and may take years to attain a particular end. Our public libraries act favors the carrying out of some definite plan, because an appointee holds office for several years, giv-

ing him an opportunity of thoroughly familiarizing himself with the whole range of library affairs to the great advantage of the best interests of the public and of the library. A further advantage of this tenure of office is that it permits of what is in athletics called "team work." We know how effective it is in this latter respect, and so it is too with a library board. I have reason to refer to this, because all libraries in Ontario are not so constituted that "team work" can be efficiently carried out. I allude to libraries whose board has no fixed continuity. With a continuity to the board definite plans may be formulated that one knows in advance will take years to carry out, but if there is no continuity to the board, each new board will have its own notion, using the term notion advisedly, in contradistinction to the matured plan, for it is not to be expected that new men, thrown into new surroundings, faced by problems wholly or nearly wholly foreign to them, can act with that intelligence, with the large-mindedness essential to the best interests of the community. The fault lies not with the men, but with the system.

One of the first considerations is the public. The trustee should know his public well, just as a physician can only treat his patient intelligently after having made a thorough diagnosis. The people of one town may differ from those of another town, their industries and interests may be different so that a successful course adopted by a board in one place may not meet with the same success in another, and as the people, the citizens, are to be beneficiaries of a public library, it is all-important that their needs be closely studied. It must ever be the aim of the trustee to try to give the greatest good to the greatest number, without however neglecting to provide opportunities within reasonable limits commensurate with the

funds available to the exceptional artisan, mechanic or bright young man who is anxious to pursue his work beyond the ordinary. It can be truly said that even those who do not use the library are to a greater or less extent benefited by it through the environment of those who do use it. One of the functions of a library, and one that generally appeals most to those that control the purse strings, is to increase the industrial productiveness of the people of the respective town or municipality. Take a town for example whose industries are almost wholly those of cabinet making. It should be the duty of a trustee to see that the library and reading room is especially rich and complete in all that pertains to cabinet making; to carpentering; the different kinds of wood; designing; drawing and everything that may further the artisan's skill and thereby his productiveness. For we must ever remember that the commercial success of a nation rests on the skill and productiveness of its artisans. This function of the public library is one that may be measured in dollars and cents, but the other function—of making better men and women, of character-building, of brightening homes by the perusal of good literature, of wholesome fiction, of making better citizens, of appreciating the rights as well as the responsibilities of citizenship, these things can not be measured in coin, but they make for a nation's progress and stability.

The most important office is of course the librarian, and the success of the library depends more upon him, or her, than upon any one else; for a poor library board and a good librarian are preferable to a good board and poor librarian.

Hence it is a most important duty of the trustee to see that the services of a good librarian be obtained, not merely an automaton that hands out books and checks off those returned. The day of utilizing men or women whose usefulness in other fields has vanished is past and such should be kept out of the library. What is wanted is a person who has enthusiasm for the work, who has studied library work and

methods, who in an unostentatious and quiet way will be helpful to the readers, who can guide particularly the younger readers in their choice of literature, who can encourage the formation of reading clubs and societies, who can make the library and reading room, especially for small libraries, cheerful and attractive by little devices, and by his or her own attitude to the users of the library add much to its usefulness and influence for good. The next duty of the trustee is to see that adequate remuneration be given for the services rendered. The good librarian is in love with his work and is quite willing to sacrifice something on that account to follow a chosen vocation. But that is no reason why inadequate remuneration should be accorded. Let the librarian feel that he is getting a fair reward for his services, co-operate with him, assist him in his endeavors to improve the usefulness of the library, let him feel that he has the good-will of the board, and do not throw all the responsibility of the whole management and its aims upon his shoulders. Do not dampen his enthusiasm and zeal by indifference and simply perfunctory attendance at meetings, or absence altogether. The library requires the undivided attention of both librarian and trustees. Bear in mind that it is an educational institution of the town with a larger attendance than that of the schools. It cannot too strongly be urged upon the trustees and board that a mere collection of books does not constitute a public library, it requires the connecting link, the librarian, to bind those two words more closely together—the public and the library, and the more intimately will they be connected the more efficient the librarian is.

A trustee should make a point of becoming somewhat acquainted with what other libraries are doing, as found in reports and publications. He may at times get thereby new ideas or pointers that may be applicable in his own library. Again if he has occasion to travel and has an hour or so to spare in a town or city where there is a public library, he should go there, "nose"

about, and he will find that the visit is profitable. The trustees should within their means make the library and room or rooms as cheerful and comfortable as possible. Let the rooms be well lighted and the light so distributed as to be restful to the eyes. Try to make the library the most attractive place in town. That in itself is a standing temperance sermon, without being preached, which many people do not like.*

Believe in the library as an educational institution for all the people, young and old; believe in the library as an aid for technical education; believe in the library as a good thing for your town; and believe in the library as making for a strong and progressive nation.

This paper was followed by one by Mr. WALTER R. NURSEY, inspector of public libraries of the province of Ontario, on

THE TRUSTEE'S DUTY TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Nursey said in part:

It is well for us all to remember, to whatever country we owe allegiance, we should be stirred by one purpose only, a common purpose that recognizes neither international barriers nor impalpable lines of latitude; our great aspiration being to increase the spread of pure literature, the democracy of letters through the coöperation of the public library which as an educational factor is soon destined to be recognized as of equal importance with university, college or school.

Before submitting to you my views on the trustee's duty to the public let me briefly recite library conditions that at present prevail in Ontario. Ontario, practically, is the only province in the Dominion of Canada that has an aggregation of public libraries, 434 in all, supported in part by the local legislature, under the fostering care of a sympathetic minister of education and a very liberal government.

The first library organized in this province, then Upper Canada, was at Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1800. In 1835, the first

legislation dealing in any way with the library movement was passed and the same year the first government aid was granted. In 1851 a new act was introduced creating what was known for many years as the Mechanics' Institute, the authorities believing that technical books for the working classes were not less important than those for the learned professions. At this time only \$2,000 per year was appropriated and this was found utterly insufficient for the purpose. In 1869 general literature was recognized in Upper Canada in this connection, in addition to the acquisition of technical books. In 1882, the first free library was organized in Canada, at Toronto.

In 1900, following upon the good example set by your organization, the Ontario library association was instituted, but it was not until 1909 that the present Ontario public library act was passed by the legislature, under which all public libraries, free and association, are now organized and controlled. To-day we have 140 free libraries and 244 association libraries in this province operating under the provisions of this act.

In Ontario, whether the library is free or association, the financial and domestic affairs of both are under the supervision of a board of trustees, the only difference in these two boards being that in the case of the free library, the governing body is called a library board and in the case of the association library, a board of management; the financial responsibilities are not altogether the same, for while the trustees of the free library are custodians and paymasters of an income derived from the special rate levied yearly for library purposes by the municipality, the board of the association libraries have no fixed income to disburse, being supported largely by the fluctuating fees of the members.

The rates levied to support a free library vary, and are based principally, as in many instances in your own country, on population, and range from a minimum rate of one-quarter of a mill on the dollar to a maximum of three-quarters of a mill.

In the case of both of these classes of libraries, government aid, of course, is extended in the form of a yearly grant based upon the annual report of the expenditure of the library upon books and paid in conformity with the libraries act, subject to departmental regulations.

Once a library in Ontario accepts a government grant, it automatically becomes a public library. Thenceforward it is amenable to the provisions of the statute and failure to keep open or render an annual report to the department of education for two consecutive years, is the signal for dissolution. In other words, it commits suicide. The minister may then take possession of all its books, its magazines and periodicals and dispose of them as he may deem best. Further, if a library fails in any year to comply with the regulations, the minister has power to withhold the whole or a portion of the government grant for that year.

The Ontario act, as you have seen, provides for two classes of libraries, both of which are public libraries; the business of both classes being administered by a board of trustees, one of whom is elected chairman, and while the responsibilities of these boards is greater in the case of the free libraries, both have equal, if not similar obligations as custodians in law of the people's interests.

Before proceeding to submit my own ideas of what appears to be the most important, if perhaps the unwritten duties of a library trustee to the public, and which I present with extreme diffidence in the presence of so many experts, let me briefly enumerate what are the legal obligations of a trustee in this Province as set forth in the statute regulating the same at the present time.

These powers are vested in the mayor, or reeve, as the case may be, with three other members appointed by the local municipal council, three by the local public school board or board of education and two by the separate school board representing the Roman Catholic section of the community; nine trustees in all who elect

their chairman and retire annually in rotation. These trustees forfeit their position if they absent themselves from three consecutive monthly meetings without leave.

The legal duties of these trustees consist in the general management, regulation and control of the library and reading room entailing the securing, erecting or renting of the necessary buildings for the purpose of the library and reading room, and the purchase of books, newspapers, magazines, maps, etc., illustrative of the arts and sciences for the library reading room and museum. These responsibilities are further increased by the necessity for keeping the building and its contents in a proper state of preservation and repair and to provide the necessary fuel, lighting and other necessaries and accommodations and also the appointment or dismissal at pleasure of the officers and servants of the board.

The board is also obliged to make rules for the use of the library reading room and museum and for the admission of the public thereto and for the general management of the library; its reading room, museum, evening classes and art school, and of all property under its control. For breaches of any of its rules, it may impose penalties not exceeding \$10.

At least two out of these nine trustees, should be women; women who have won a record for activity and good common sense in their departments of business.

It is also the duty of the faithful trustee to encourage the public to realize that it is the librarian, not the trustee, who is the real pilot of the ship, and jealously uphold the hands of that important official. Unfortunately the library has sometimes been converted into an asylum for the village derelict whose unfitness for any ordinary business pursuits would seem to be the highest passport possible, his incapacity emphasizing in the minds of some trustees his apparent suitability for the position.

Summarizing the situation, we find the general importance of the position of a

trustee viewed from the "library act" point of view, to be that

(1) He holds the property of the library in trust for the whole community.

(2) That the board has the same standing as any other corporate public body, town council, school board, board of education, etc.

(3) That the trustees alone can manage public library affairs and that they have the exclusive authority to pay rent, to build or to sell property, subject to the statutory provisions.

(4) That they have the power both to raise and expend money for library purposes.

(5) That they can demand certain moneys from the municipal council, ranging from a quarter of a mill up to three-quarters of a mill on the dollar of the total annual assessment at the will of the rate-payers.

(6) That the trustees alone are empowered to employ or dismiss the librarian and other members of the staff.

(7) And that they alone are responsible to the public.

Their importance, if further evidence was wanting, is established by the development of the library movement in the Province of Ontario, demonstrated by the fact that as individuals, they have been active in founding and maintaining the Ontario library association. Hence it is easy to understand that the hope for the real and lasting expansion of library work largely depends upon the educating of the trustee up to the sane realization of his responsibilities.

In order to have a fair understanding of the trustee's many obligations, we must consider the duties he is called upon to perform in connection with his own library. He should be present and assist at the Easter meetings of the Ontario library association, and attend the library institutes which are yearly held in each of the 14 library districts into which the province has been carved for this purpose. As an evidence of the material of which

the ordinary trustee is made, it is well to note that out of nine presidents who up to the present time have filled that office in the Ontario library association, between the years 1900 and 1912, six at one time or another have been library trustees. Eighty trustees were active officers of these library institutes in 1911, and of these at least 75 gave papers or addresses during the year ending April, 1912.

Wonderful opportunities for extending the influence of clean literature is held by every trustee in the hollow of his hand, and the literature of the library, taken in all its bearings, forms the great line of demarkation between the human and the animal kingdom. Hence, the sound and intelligent coupling of morally well-balanced men and women should be sought, not merely the professional educationist, who, not infrequently is apt to be somewhat narrow in his vision; "not the mere literary triflers or amateur reformers" nor the league of superficial progressives who amuse themselves by lopping off the branches of an evil, but rather the strong and impatient workers, the real trail-makers who strike at the roots. Often in a rough and most unpromising exterior we find the very elements and characteristics we have long sought in vain.

In and out of season, first, last, and all the time in addition to his statutory obligations the trustee should make the welfare of the librarian his greatest concern. What the pilot is, what the sails are, what the wheel and the propelling power are, individually and collectively to the ship—so is the librarian to the library. It is quite conceivable that a library could exist without a trustee, but almost inconceivable that it could exist without a librarian.

In Ontario we are doing all we can to elevate the status of the librarian, as well as her status in the army of intellectual workers. We have summer schools and library institutes to encourage her in her ambitions and to improve her knowledge. I am persuaded that on the walls of every library might well be written in large

characters, and without any suspicion of disrespect, "God bless our Librarian." I refer of course, to the faithful efficient librarian with a proper conception of her own duties who should be honoured in the community by virtue of her position entailing such profound responsibilities. Her smallest act of official consideration, to her juvenile readers especially, leaves a widening ripple of influence, the far-reaching effect of which can scarcely be over-estimated. The librarian, unless it is obviously inopportune, should also without doubt be invited to attend every meeting of the trustees and share their undivided confidence, and the importance of her position and her individuality should never be dominated or over-shadowed by the personality of the trustee. Her suggestions wherever possible should be respected, deferred to and acted upon, and every point strained to give her a living wage as nearly commensurate as circumstances will permit, with a due and extreme regard for the importance of her task,—at best, a somewhat thankless one.

I am a strong advocate for Sunday opening wherever it can be accomplished without interfering with the conscience or freedom of the employee, and if exempt from hardship. I further believe that every trustee should permit the purchase of books relating to any religious belief providing that they are not of a contro-

versial nature, and that he should actively co-operate with the librarian in the selection of the really best current literature, both books and periodicals, giving fiction, say a 50% maximum at the most.

Last, but not least I maintain that it should be a man trustee's greatest pleasure and manifest duty to secure the co-operation of at least two capable women workers to share his responsibilities as co-trustees.

Discussion brought out the interesting fact that the Ontario library association included in its membership almost as many trustees as librarians. Mr. Bowker suggested that those from the states interested in library development should seek to follow the Canadian example in this respect, and obtain more active participation from trustees in the library association. Dr. C. R. Charteris, president of the Ontario library association, gave further word on the relation of trustees to the library organization in Canada, and Mr. T. W. Banton, trustee of the Toronto public library, who had been present at the Magnolia conference, spoke of his disappointment at finding so little participation by trustees in that meeting. The officers of the section were re-elected for another year: Chairman, W. T. Porter, trustee Cincinnati public library; secretary, T. L. Montgomery, librarian Pennsylvania State library.

PUBLIC DOCUMENTS ROUND TABLE

A Public Documents Round Table was held on July 1, Mr. George S. Godard, State librarian of Connecticut, in the chair. Miss Elizabeth M. Smith of New York state library was appointed secretary.

The preliminary report of the Committee on public documents already printed was read, in order to bring briefly before the session the status of the bills now before Congress relating to the printing, binding and distribution of public documents.

The chairman reported his efforts to bring to the conference the Superintendent

of Documents, Mr. August Donath, to present in person a paper on the new printing bill. A failure of Congress to provide in the appropriations for traveling expenses for this and similar purposes, made this impossible. The chairman, Mr. Godard, reported that he had laid before the Senate Committee on appropriations the advisability of appropriating funds to pay expenses of the Superintendent of Documents, or some other competent official, while trying to get into closer relations with the depository and other document